ATTORNEY DOCKET NO: 72274

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant	: COTTONE
PCT No.	: PCT/EP2004/014325
Confirm. No.	: N/A
Filed	: June 19, 2006
For	: METHOD AND DEVICE...
Art Unit	: N/A
Examiner	: N/A
Dated	: June 19, 2006

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Attached please find Form PTO/SB/08a together with the references as stated in the specification.

- DE 40 30 215 C2 as discussed on Page 4 of the specification. No translation is available at this time, however, attached is an English language abstract.

- DE 35 41 900 A1 as discussed on Page 4 of the specification. No translation is available at this time, however, attached is an English language abstract.

- DE 37 41 257 A1 as discussed on Page 4 of the specification. No translation is available at this time, however, attached is an English language abstract.

- DE 34 24 233 C2 as discussed on Page 5 of the specification. No translation is available at this time, however, attached is an English language abstract.

The following references have been cited in the International Phase of the above-

identified application.

- US 4,251,979 discloses a device for conveying and orienting bottle-shaped containers. The device described has a holding mechanism 14 for a group of containers 16 which can be removed from a conveyor belt 11, subsequently a geometrical arrangement of containers in the group is modified by a relative displacement of holding devices for the containers within the holding mechanism. The container group is then introduced into a loading aid.

- DE 102 10 353 A1 describes a method and a device for reversing bottles, in which the bottles are received with packing tulips and supplied to a pack and in which, following the reception of the bottles and prior to the insertion of the bottles in the pack, for the purpose of modifying a geometrical arrangement of the bottles prior to the insertion of the same in the pack the packing tulips are moved towards one another. The reference has been cited under Category X as being relevant to International claims 1 - 5, 23 and 24. No translation is available at this time, however, attached is an English language abstract.

DE-OS 27 14 352 discloses a device for the automatic extraction of stacks of finished hollow articles hot-formed from a plastic sheet from a stacking station, in which a spacing caused by the hot forming machine between the said stacks is to be retained during packing in a dispatch carton. For this purpose the known device has an arrangement of poles 26, which are in each case placed between a plurality of finished stacks and which are rotatable about the longitudinal axis for retaining and releasing the stacks, projections 27 passing into a corresponding gripping position 27'. This reference has been cited under Category X as being relevant to International claim 23. No translation is available at this time, however, attached

is an English language abstract.

- US 5,328,319 discloses a robot system for mixing and packing articles, in which a robot by means of a gripping device takes up an arrangement of articles at a first location and then unloads it again completely or partially at a second location.

All the known methods and devices more particularly suffer from the disadvantage that on converting to a new diameter for the rod-shaped objects to be handled, which can in particular be poles of deep-drawn plastic cups, so-called cup poles, it is necessary for a time-consuming, costly setting-up of different machine elements associated with a corresponding down-time, so that overall there is only a limited variant flexibility and a non-optimum usability. It is also impossible with the known devices or can only be brought about by a time-consuming, costly re-setting to bring about an optimum density and therefore a space-saving arrangement of the objects in the loading aid.

The problem of the invention is to further develop a method and a device of the aforementioned type in such a way that it is possible to bring about a fully automatic handling of rod-shaped objects, particularly cup poles, accompanied by packing and unpacking in conjunction with a loading aid, such as a carton. The method and device according to the invention is also to be usable in the case of varying diameters of the objects to be handled in a flexible manner and with minimum down-time and in addition the packing density of the objects within the loading aid is to be optimized.

The following references have been cited in the Office Action of the corresponding application.

- DE 27 51 953 A1. No translation is available at this time.

- DE 198 38 076 A1. Packing process for producing multipacks from a number of articles such as stacked cups by introduction into cartons or other large containers. No translation is available at this time, however, attached is an English language abstract. Applicant further wishes to bring to the attention of the Examiner the corresponding U.S. Patent 6,397,567.

- DE 27 14 352 B2. This reference has been previously discussed above. Applicant further wishes to bring to the attention of the Examiner the corresponding U.S. Patent 4,132,319.

- DE 299 07 459 U1. This reference discloses a feeder for a tube-filling machine. No translation is available at this time, however, attached is an English language abstract. Applicant further wishes to bring to the attention of the Examiner the corresponding U.S. Patent 6,733,224.

Consideration of the above references is requested.

Respectfully submitted
for Applicant,

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JJM:tf

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Enclosed: PTO/SB/08a Form
copy of International Search Report
copy of Office Action
copies of (9) References and (8) English Abstracts

DATED: June 19, 2006
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